



# APD NEWS

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## **Auto Thieves Targeting Specific Vehicles**

The Austin Police Department Auto Theft Interdiction Project is urging owners of large Ford model pickups (F-250, F350) and Dodge pickups (1500, 2500) to be aware of auto thieves who are targeting their vehicles.

Vehicle theft is often a "gateway" crime, meaning it leads to other more serious crimes such as human smuggling, drug trafficking and weapon smuggling. It's a known fact that where you go, vehicle criminals go too. Vehicle crimes are committed on your street, your favorite mall, hospitals or fitness center parking lots.

APD Auto Theft Interdiction Detectives have noticed trucks have become favorites among smugglers by removing the back seat and making room to commit the crime. Most of the reported stolen trucks from the City of Austin are being recovered in counties surrounding the South Texas border.

Vehicle owners can reduce their risk from becoming a victim of auto theft by taking precautions that will make vehicles less of a target:

- Take your keys – Half of all vehicles stolen in Texas are the result of drivers leaving their keys behind.
- Lock your car. Approximately half of all stolen vehicles are left unlocked.
- Never leave your car running, even if you'll only be gone a minute. Many vehicles are stolen on cold mornings when owners leave them running to warm up or to get a quick cup of coffee at a convenience store. In Texas, it's illegal to leave your car running. If convicted, you can be fined up to \$200.
- Park in well-lit areas and don't leave valuables in your vehicle. Don't make your car a more desirable target and attract thieves.
- Install protection devices – Visible steering wheel locks, ignition kill switches, fuel kill switches, alarms and vehicle tracking devices.

The APD Auto Theft Interdiction Project programs are funded through the Texas Automobile Burglary and Theft Prevention Authority to reduce auto and burglary theft in the State of Texas.

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